

Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans

587 law was taken to wife more often than not. To remonstrances the reply was, "She belongs to us," and it was pointed out it was the only way to get a wife without paying for her.

[587] In these districts, if the widow is sold, the bride-price is shared by her husband's family and her father's.

595 A man at Nikaj came to see me who was excommunicate for having
577 two wives—a legitimate wife and the widow of his cousin. He told me
688 he could not possibly put her away because it would be a disgrace to do so. She must stay in the house because she had young children to bring up, and so long as she is in the house he must cohabit with her, for she cannot have another husband. He was unhappy about the excommunication—but one must do one's duty and take the risk.

587 It is perhaps noteworthy that in the districts where this custom
144 is firmly rooted there are no Slavonic place-names and no appearance
103 of any Slavonic blood. The people are all in stature shorter and smaller built than the Maltsia e Madhe people. They are almost all dark-eyed—dark-brown to hazel—and dark-haired. The skull is short, but is round at the back and has not the characteristic flat back of the folk farther north. The hair grows very low on the forehead, especially on the temples, where sometimes it almost unites by a thin line of hair with the outer end of the eyebrow. The eyebrows often nearly meet in the middle. The nose is short and straight. The moustache is sparse and straggly. The beard, such as is seen after a fortnight without shaving, often sparse or patchy.

587 The custom of the levirate may therefore belong to the small,
174 dark, pre-Slavonic people.

The purpose of the levirate in other lands is often said to be to raise up children who are to rank as those of the deceased. Though this may have been the reason in the above-mentioned case of the man who took the very recently married widow of his brother, in the great majority of cases in Albania it is not so; for the widow with sons is the one who has the right to remain, and in fact must remain, in the family house; and therefore it is she who is most frequently the levirate wife. In this matter Albanian custom seems to differ from that in other lands where the levirate is practised.

4. RIGHTS OF HUSBAND OVER WIFE

562 No one may beat a woman but her father or her husband. In the mountains a husband had the right to beat his wife if he told her three
593 times to do, or not to do, a thing, and she disobeyed each time. If he
681 orders her not to reply and she does so he may beat her. Even some

*Ancient Albania***ALBANIA YESTERDAY AND TODAY**

- 144 *The ancient Epirots were as distinct from*
the Hellenes as the Albanians are from the modern Greeks. The Greek writers of ancient times referred to them as a Pelasgic race, or, in other words, the descendants of the aboriginal inhabitants of the country.

The Pelasgian Zeus has his memory, even today, in their language, for we find the Albanian word for God is "Zoti." A minute's examination of the term "Gheg" and "Tosk" reveals that they are identical with "Truscus" or "Etruscus," while the form "Tyrrhenus" perhaps survives in Tirana, the capital of the Kingdom of Albania, as no other explanation for the derivation of the name of the city can be found.

- 618 These Pelasgians formed a cluster of rude,
619 rough, highland clans, very similar to those of the Highlanders of Scotland a hundred and fifty years ago, brave, illiterate and essentially barbarian in character. Oftimes these clans and tribes were banded together in an independent government of a tribal sort. They even went farther and coalesced into little
175 kingdoms of greater or lesser extent. In the times of the successor of Alexander the Great, Epirus made considerable progress in civilization, and its kings exerted no small degree

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of influence in the affairs of state of Eastern/75 Europe. Pyrrhus, one of the last of these kings, was a man of the greatest ability and made an illustrious name for himself because of his learning and his statescraft, and, moreover, augmented the glory of his nation by reason of his executive ability. Among the bravest of brave, Pyrrhus did not hesitate to cross the Adriatic to aid in the defense of the Greek colonies of Southern Italy, Magna Graecia; neither did he hesitate to grapple with the rising power of Rome, and as a result, winning a prominent place for himself among the great commanders of the world.

In the year 168 before Christ, the Romans wreaked a terrible vengeance on Epirus, destroying seven towns and reducing one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants to slavery. This was the only time in the history of the race that the Epirots were ever thoroughly subdued. But even the Roman conquest/77 wrought little change in their social customs. They still retained their own language, national customs and usages, and withal, remained a distinct and peculiar people.

The question as to whether the Albanians/44 • are genuine Epirots and Illyrians or a new/97 people formed by large and repeated infusions

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144 of barbarians from the north has been very
197 much discussed. It was finally decided, upon
evidence furnished by their language, which
has been definitely determined a true repre-
sentative of the ancient Illyrian, that the
Albanians are the direct descendants of these
ancient people, the Epirots and the Illyrians,
who were neighbors and kindred tribes speak-
ing different dialects of the same language;
though, perhaps through the course of the
ages, the Albanians may have become mingled,
especially in the north, with other foreign
elements.

144 Some ethnologists and students of the race
and language declare with certainty that the
Illyrian is one of the aboriginal races of
Europe and that, if the term "Pelasgi" was
ever used to designate a particular people,
this must have been the race to which it re-
ferred. There is definite proof that their
numerous tribes extended far into the north,
even beyond the Danube, and this leads us to
surmise rightfully that the Illyrians were the
first branch of the Indo-European race to
settle in Europe and were there long before
the time of the Celts.

The old division between the Epirots and

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the Illyrians has its modern counterpart in the¹⁷⁴ • marked distinction between the Northern and Southern Albanians. For, as is brought to the attention of the traveller through Albania, there is a most evident dissimilarity between these two peoples. Yannina, or, more correctly speaking, Ioannina, was the capital of Epirus, while Scutari—in Albanian language Shkodra—was the seat of the Northern Province.

In the course of her long history, Albania¹⁷⁷ has been invaded by countless civilized, half-¹⁷⁵ civilized and barbaric peoples. The Greeks colonized a part of the Illyrian seaboard probably in the latter half of the seventh century. The most important of these settlements were Epidamnus (Durazzo or Durrës in Albanian language) and Salona (near Spalato). Greek inscriptions and pottery have been excavated by archaeologists. However, Greek influence never penetrated into the interior. These colonies were superceded by the Latins about three hundred years before Christ. The Spartans and Athenians were the next to come into conflict with the Illyrians. In the beginning of the fourth century the Celts invaded Albania. The Gauls, the Goths, the Romans, the Slavs, the Venetians, and, finally, the Turks

CHAPTER XI.

ALBANIAN WOMEN: THEIR FOLK-BELIEFS.

144 MR. STUART GLENNIE's suggestion¹ that the Albanians
114 are probably a mixed Pelasgo-Aryan race, and that the Pelasgians, whose Larissas extend from Italy and Greece through Asia Minor to Northern Syria and Chaldea, were related to the Archaian White Race, the founders of civilisation in the Euphrates Valley, gives special interest to all their folk-lore.

771 Survivals of ancient Nature-worship, which neither Christianity nor Islam has succeeded in eliminating, may be found in the form of the oaths still in use in the Albanian highlands. Contact with the outer world has taught the dwellers in towns to call upon the Virgin and Saints, or Allah and Mohammed, as witnesses to their word; but the oaths of the pastoral Skipetar are still "By sky and earth" (*Per kielh e per dhë*), "By mountain and plain" (*Per ket ziarm e per ket uë*), and "By sun and moon" (*Per ket dielh e per ket hân*). The curious ceremony of taking the "Oath of the Stone," which is said by Wassa Effendi² to have been a Pelasgian custom, is

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¹ First made in Europe and Asia (1879), and more fully in papers on the Archaian White Races, read in 1887 at meetings of the Royal Historical Society and of the British Association.

² *Etudes sur l'Albanie et les Albanais*.

In Mer -

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turi and Nikaj, the men adopt 2 sets of names, Moslem and Christian, and employ the former while traveling to avoid trouble. They get used to these names and in many cases use them at home. In Hoti, the *bairaktar* once led his men against the invading Serbs, with the help of the Turkish government. In gratitude for his brave and successful conduct the Turks granted him special privileges, and he went over, with his family, to Islam. The rest of the *bairak* is still mostly Catholic, but the tendency in such a case is for the others to follow the leader. In Lura, where mixed families are found, the Catholics have given up keeping pigs so as not to offend the Moslems, and celebrate Moslem festivals as well as Christian ones, to avoid trouble. Very rarely a Mirdite will marry a Moslem woman from Mati, but when he does she becomes Catholic.

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When the Turks introduced Islam, all Ghegs were Catholics. Almost exclusively, the change has been in the Moslem direction. Hence we may assume that almost none of the present-day Catholics bear genetic elements brought in from outside the region by the Turks or their followers, while the same is not necessarily true of the Moslem Ghegs. *Bairak* by *bairak* and tribe by tribe, as conversion progressed, the line between the 2 religions has remained, by and large, a marital barrier. During the whole period of the Turkish rule, Catholics have furthermore been able to travel much less widely than Moslems, with resultant genetic implications.

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In Albania one frequently hears the remark that "the Albanians are not very religious." This is usually said with pride, for the presence of 3 religions in so small a country is deemed a dangerous impediment to political unity. In one sense, the remark is quite true. Few Albanians are religious fanatics; few of them worry about their spiritual salvation. Most of the Catholics go to church with some regularity, and most of the Moslems keep Ramadan. However, their ancient way of life provides most of the ritual which they need to tide them over emotional crises, so that church and mosque are in many ways superfluous. A man's first loyalty is to his "blood," that is, his extended family. He spends much of his time, effort, and material goods keeping the family together and avenging any deed which has up-

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174 the land and decrease of manpower probably counterbalanced each other.

It must have taken several centuries for the pioneers to explore every valley, choose the most favorable sites, and put them into cultivation. In a few centuries more, less favorable lands which could support a thinner population would also have been cleared. But by the beginning of the Christian era, the time when the first outside influence, that of Rome, made itself felt on the fringes of the Gheg mountains, this region may well have been populated to its present capacity. This means that there was no room for Romans or anyone else to settle without armed invasion. Even with armed invasion, as many have discovered, the Gheg mountains are hard to take.

[144] Biologically the significance of this is of course that while the original settlers of our area must have been a mixed lot, they were probably able to fill their country with progeny before any concerted attempts were made by outsiders to invade their territory. The majority of them were undoubtedly Illyrians from Bosnia, while others may have been Thracians from the plains to the northeast. Racially they were probably a mixture of Nordics, Mediterraneans from the Adriatic littoral, brachycephals from the same region, and Pontic Mediterraneans from the Euxine borderlands. They were able to stew in their own genetic juice and produce their own variety of human beings.

175 Roman authors have much to say about the peoples all around Ghegnia, but very little about the mountaineers themselves. This silence is very significant. All of Ghegnia except for the southern portions of Mati and Dibra formed a part of the province of Dalmatia, while those 2 sections of tribes plus what is now central Albania went with Macedonia. The present Tosk country was part of Epirus, which was considered distinct from Greece. While the predecessors of the Tosks

* Durham, 1928, p. 14.

* Strabonis Geographia, Book 7, p. 457, lines 3-6:
"... et Drilo fluvius, quo adverso navigatur orientem
versus usque ad Dardanicam."

or

και Δριλων ποταμός ἀνάπλων ἔχων πῶς ἔω, μέχρι
τῆς Δαρδανικῆς.

$\frac{1}{n}$ [Cont. on p. 41 b]
-- Analyst

[41] prominent, the buttocks medium to small, the calves well developed, the heels a little more projecting than expected, the foot arch about medium. This is a picture of an average man who has led an active out-of-door life in a hard but healthy environment, on a minimum of food which is nevertheless well balanced; he is muscular, lean, and accustomed to walking long distances over rough terrain. From the neck down it would be hard to distinguish him from a shepherd in the Scottish Highlands, a Norwegian from the fjord country, or an Appalachian mountaineer.

[47] Only one physiological test was made: dynamometer squeeze. Despite the cold weather, despite the stiffening of fingers through years of ploughing, the mountaineers produced a mean of 112 pounds, ranging from 45 to 190 (see table 9).

II. The Face

[41] From the neck up the resemblance to Scot
[44] and Norwegian would continue in most respects, but would disappear in others. In the more noticeable dimensions of the face it would be quite close. The Albanian mountaineers have moderately long faces, both in the distance from nasion to alveon (the point on the gums between the 2 upper median incisors) and from nasion to menton. It is hard to make close comparisons because individual anthropometrists vary greatly in locating these points. Comparing them with series of which one can be moderately sure that the same techniques were used, we see that the Ghegs are about the same in face length as populations which are predominantly Nordic or which represent the larger varieties of Mediterranean—like the English, the Riffians, and the Basques, and shorter faced than populations with an excess of marginal pre-Neolithic genetic elements, like the Irish and Norwegians. They are longer-faced than the small Mediterranean peoples like Spaniards and southern Italians. The upper face is relatively long in proportion to the total face height; this is usually, in Euro-

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pean populations, found among peoples who are predominantly Mediterranean in type, but not very different from the situation in some populations usually considered Nordic.

The minimum frontal diameter, the only measurement usually taken of the forehead, is another troublesome criterion from the technical standpoint. Variations in technique between anthropometrists render most comparisons specious. Using only series which we know to be comparable, one can easily see that the Ghegs, with a mean of nearly 109 millimeters, are broader in this dimension than the long-faced Europeans to whom they are also similar in stature and body build; most of the Mediterranean and Nordic series run to 102-106 millimeters. In the bizygomatic, which is difficult to get wrong, they are again more comparable to the larger and broader-faced European populations. Here they fit in with the larger-faced local populations of Norway and Ireland, and exceed standard Nordics and Mediterraneans. In the bigonial, however, this excess is much smaller. As a result the typical Gheg face, like that of the traditional Basque, looks like an equilateral triangle set on its apex (*frontispiece*)¹

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The nose height of the Ghegs is exceeded by few in Europe, or in the world. Several factors contribute to this position, including the fact that the nasal septum and tip among the older men were so depressed that age changes of the soft parts must have played a conditioning role in my measuring. At the same time the nose breadth is among the narrowest in Europe and the world, and the nasal index is extremely leptorrhine.

The ratio between forehead and face breadths (zygo-frontal) is high in all Dinaric series, the Ghegs included; it reflects the unusual width of the forehead. The zygo-gonial is even higher, for the same reason, coupled with the fact that the bigonial diameter is relatively less than the bizygomatic. The facial index of the present series falls on the borderline between Martin's categories of mesoprosopic and leptoprosopic—although the Gheg faces are large, their length-breadth proportions are moderate. This is not true of the nose, which has one of the lowest nasal indices on record, placing it in the hyperleptorrhine category.

2[see cat. No. , facing title page -- Analysis]

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000 Sixty-five per cent of these young men would have dark-to-medium brown hair, 20 per cent black, and 15 per cent blond, including light brown. The skin would be fair; most of the eyes would be mixed, with the lighter shades predominant, and darks and pure lights would constitute about a fourth of the whole. Sixty per cent of the noses would have straight or slightly wavy profiles, 10 per cent would be concave, and only 30 per cent convex.

These boys would not be distinguishable from ordinary Americans, except to an expert on race, who might recognize them as different, not individually, but as a group, only by their possession of a mean cephalic index about 4 points higher than the average. Or perhaps the brachycephaly too would fade away upon transplanting; that we cannot tell.

144 16. If we equate the Mountain Ghegs in such a fashion with western Europeans and Americans, we find that they would be comparable to many local populations in western Germany and Austria. They are of the same basic genetic stock, disseminated widely in the Iron Age, from which most northern and western European peoples came.

17. Like most other European populations of essentially Nordic or Mediterranean (or Nordic and Mediterranean) character, they include telltale traces of pre-Nordic and pre-Mediterranean racial features, which make some of them broader of trunk, more heavily muscled, wider of head and face, blunter nosed, and heavier jawed than others. In the Mountains of Giants this element is concentrated in the northwest, in Dukagin, with a lesser incidence in Malsia e Madhe. Were the series from that confederation large enough, regional subseries would probably make this clear. It seems most likely that this element entered with the Bosnian immigration of the 16th century, although some of it may have been present in still earlier times.

000 18. Geography, technology, sociology, history, and physical anthropology all play their parts in the resolution of this problem. I only hope that the answer is really as simple as I have suggested.

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 291 consists of caps that have been sewn on, as well as a bush of peacock's feathers and colored cock's feathers. (Compare Globus, volume 78, page 387). The carpet aprons that are illustrated in Figure 5 likewise have their original provenience from the northeast. As is the rule throughout the Balkans, the silver ornamentation among the Bosnian South Slavs is rich and variegated. Especially filigree is forged with the greatest of artistic skill.

/97: Illustrations. /

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The Albanians

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1. Type of fortified building. 2. Hut in Durazzo. 3. Mountain hut near Gusinje. 4. and 5. Chairs. 6. Cradle from Planti. 7. Fireplace in Nikaj. 8. Interior of a hut in Pula with intertwined reed walls, and a roof consisting of rafters, reed, and bulrush bundles. 9. Fireplace and hearth bench in a niche of the wall, in Hotin. 10. House door in Brebula, with an ornament arched like a wedge, and hook-like stone projections used for hanging up the guns. 11. Interior of a fortified house (kula). 12. Fireplace with hearth bench and smoke outlet in the niche of the wall. 13. Carving on a chest from Scutari.

A.
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Between Montenegro and Epirus the strongly mountainous coastal area of the Balkan Peninsula has preserved primitive European racial elements and maintained ancient cultural forms. Here the Albanian people is settled, the people of the Skyptars, the troglodytes or inhabitants of the land of the eagles or of the descendants of eagles, according to the various explanations. By the Turks they are called

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Arnauts. From pre-Aryan Illyrians, who belong to the oldest inhabitants of the European-Asiatic land mass, and from Aryan Thracians there was formed a basic stock. To this were added Goths, Slavs, Greeks, and, since 1450, Turks, as well as sporadic Roman elements and later Italian influxes along the coast. All these combined to form the

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Albanians who today are divided into two groups according to the dialects of their Indo-European language, that is, into the northern Gegen and the southern Tuscans. These two groups are in turn divided into a great number of sub-stocks. The former, with predominantly Slavic, Serbian blood, are tougher, more war-like, more conservative; the Tuscans,

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1 [For illustrations, see 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat. 116, p. 679 -- Analyst]
 2 [see 1: Karutz, E1 Europe, cat. 116, p. 662 -- Analyst]

- 181 on the other hand, are strongly mixed with Greeks and softer, more
44 accessible to civilizing influences, and more desirous of innovations.
The consciousness of their racial coherence determines their life in
tradition--they know their genealogical trees, and hundreds of names
in them--; their boundless hospitality on the one hand, and their
boundless desire for feuding and the implacability of their revenge
342 for murder, on the other hand. Of archaic methods of living there
are to be found, as temporary living quarters, caves in naturally formed
erosions of river banks, closed off in front by plaited mats of switches.
Furthermore, there are conical huts made from unhewn stems and
rushes left long in cutting, in the coastal swamps; also, half under-
ground, walled up pits with a thatched saddle-roof and a mound of
earth thrown against it, used by herders and herds. Then there are
loam-covered huts of intertwined beech twigs and with a reed or leaf
roofing (Figure 2); one-room houses with walls filled out with grass or
pieces of turf with a flat roof frame-work consisting of three transverse
beams and boards loosely laid over them and weighted down with
rocks (Figure 3, which, furthermore, shows, next to the hut, a frame
for storing meat, and so forth, with a notched tree stump serving as
steps and a spruce tree serving as a natural hook for hanging things).
The permanent dwellings, always fenced in, are log cabins in the
forested region of the north; for the rest they are stone houses bound
with mortar, in central and southern Albania with walled-in supporting
beams, covered with straw, shingles, slate, planks, or furrowed tiles.
Originally it was level with the ground, with one or two rooms, then
it turned into a building with two or more stories, with or without a
verandah. The perpetual insecurity of the country as a consequence of the
blood revenge feuds developed tower-like fortified buildings (kulen),
with embrasures and a solid roof difficult of access (Figure 1),
out of bulletproof interior structures. The division into rooms in the
interior of these buildings is rarely made by means of walls, more
frequently just through boards or intertwined twigs, or sometimes even
just through larger objects like chests. Into the urban building and
decorative arts Italian-Venetian, Byzantine-Near Eastern, and Turkish
influences have penetrated; the Scutari chest wall in Figure 13 shows
a well-known pattern of Persian ornamentation with a tree of motif
in the final state of degeneration. The interior of the houses has loam
352 floors or timber floors; wall boards for putting away things (Figure 8),
wall pegs for hanging up dishes; tables in the shape of plates made of
two half-moon-shaped boards joined together to form a circle, with
1 [See! Karutz, E1 Europe, Cat. 116, p. 67a--Analyst]